



## UN Regional Commissions

*"Voicing regional perspectives on global issues"*

Climate Change:  
Supporting Actions at the Regional Level





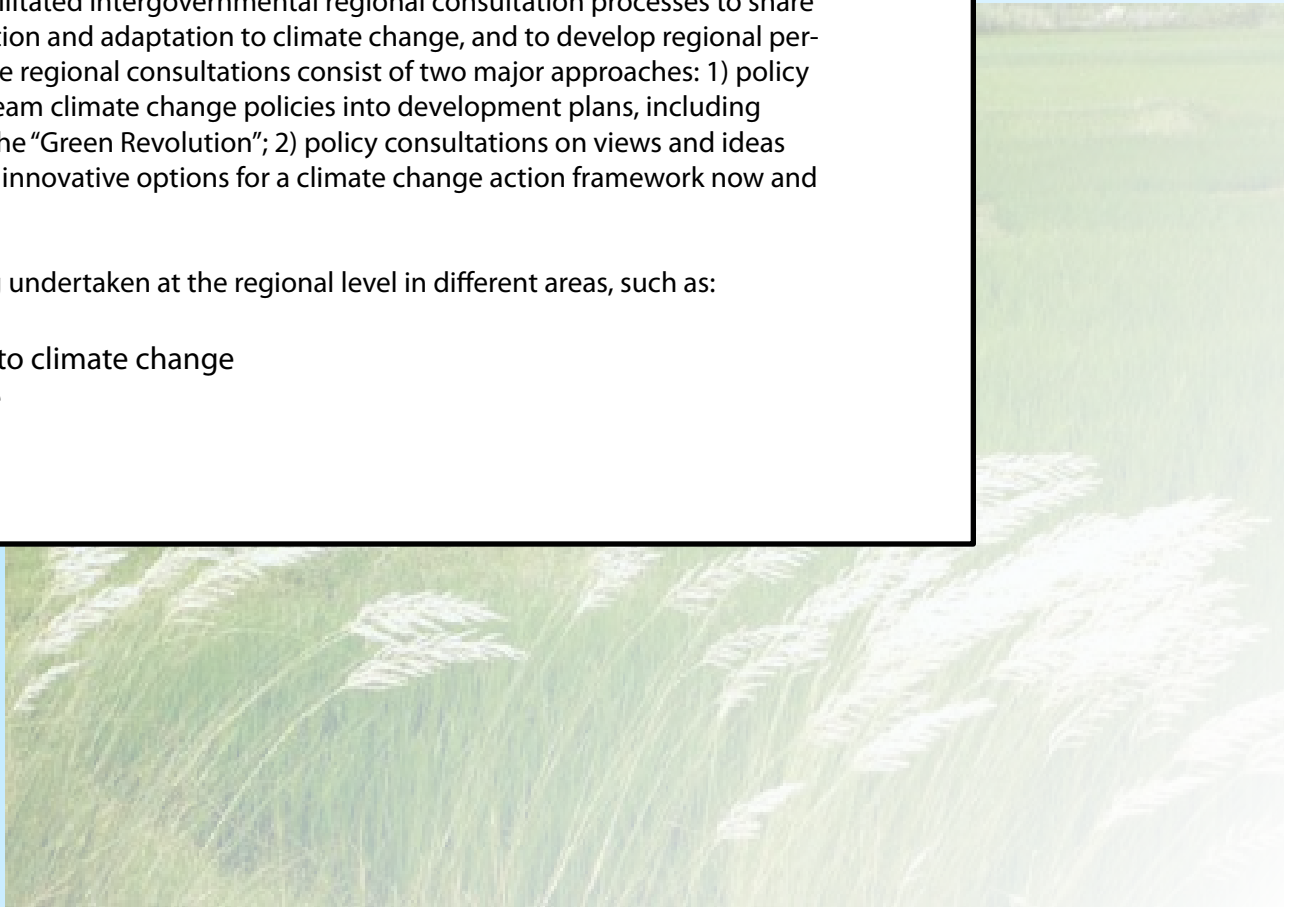
## Introduction

Working with their UN and other regional partners, the UN Regional Commissions are mobilizing their normative, analytical and technical capabilities to undertake collaborative initiatives and actions on climate change in support of Member States to, inter alia: integrate climate change considerations into development plans, strategies and programmes at national and regional levels; assess the economic impacts of climate change and evaluate the costs of mitigation and adaptation, and explore options for climate change financing; enhance their capabilities and leverage resources for disaster risk reduction and preparedness; prepare methodologies for assessing the vulnerability of water resources; and examine the impacts of climate change on land, agricultural productivity and food security from social, economic and environmental perspectives.

The UN Regional Commissions have also facilitated intergovernmental regional consultation processes to share information about policy options for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and to develop regional perspectives on the post-2012 framework. These regional consultations consist of two major approaches: 1) policy options on the appropriate ways to mainstream climate change policies into development plans, including through the “Green Growth” approach and the “Green Revolution”; 2) policy consultations on views and ideas for the follow-up to the Bali Action Plan and innovative options for a climate change action framework now and beyond 2012.

Collaborative actions and initiatives are being undertaken at the regional level in different areas, such as:

1. Supporting national planning related to climate change
2. Assessing the costs of Climate Change
3. Supporting mitigation efforts; and
4. Supporting Adaptation efforts

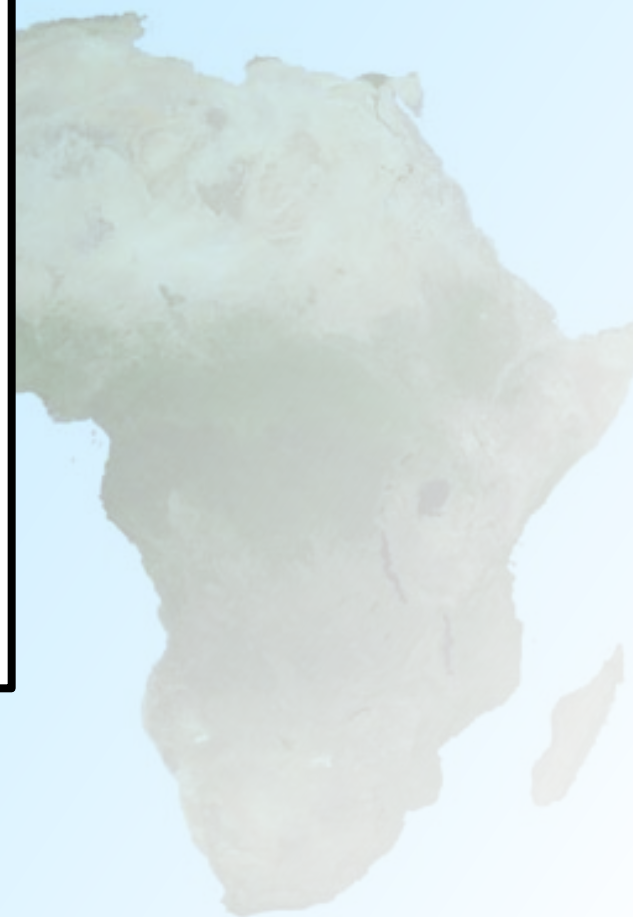


## 1. Supporting national planning related to climate change:

Integrating climate change considerations into development plans, strategies and programmes at national and regional levels: In view of Africa's vulnerability to climate change, African political leaders have expressed their commitment to tackle this challenge. At the eighth ordinary session of the African Union held in January 2007, African Heads of State and Government urged African States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), in collaboration with the private sector, civil society and development partners, pledged to integrate climate change considerations into development plans, strategies and programmes at national and regional levels. In this regard, they requested the African Union Commission (AUC) to work with ECA and the African Development Bank (AfDB) to develop and implement a major plan on climate change and development in Africa. In response to this call, these Pan African institutions, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS), developed the Climate for Development-Africa (Climdev-Africa) Programme.

[www.uneca.org/eca\\_programmes/sdd/events/climate/climdev.pdf](http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/events/climate/climdev.pdf)

The overall goal of Climdev-Africa is to promote the sustainable attainment of the MDGs and overall sustainable development in Africa. More specifically, the programme sets out to scale up the capacities of key institutions and stakeholders with a view to improving climate-related data and observation, information services, policies, investment processes and risk-management practices in climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, water and other natural resources, energy, and health. ClimDev-Africa will be implemented at the regional, sub-regional and national levels with the active involvement of the RECs, regional and sub-regional climate institutions, river/lake basin organizations, national weather, climate and water services and other public authorities, research institutions, civil society organizations and the media. The Programme implementation rests on two key instruments: the ECA-based African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) as its policy arm and the AfDB-based Special Climate Change Funding Mechanism, as its financial arm.



## 2. Assessing the costs of Climate Change:

### a. Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change and Evaluating the Costs of Mitigation and Adaptation:

In the Asia and the Pacific regions, ESCAP has supported the work of the Asian Development Bank on a regional review of the economics of climate change in South East Asia and currently discusses applying the assessment to Northeast Asia. The review is based on the Stern Review's methodology. The review shows that temperature rise in South East Asia could be higher than the IPCC projection and the economic costs of climate change could be higher than predicted globally. In Latin America and the Caribbean regions, ECLAC participated in the Mexican study on the Economics of Climate Change and is currently preparing the studies on economy and climate change in eight South American nations: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, as well as for Central America and the Caribbean, in order to harmonize the methodological approaches among countries in order to have comparable results and a regional review. These studies will examine the costs of climate change by sector (water, agriculture, health, infrastructure, etc) of adaptation, of trends in GHG emissions and the potential to mitigate their effects. These studies will be the basis for future in depth subregional and country analyses directed by ECLAC, along with the governments and technical teams of the countries involved, the governments of the UK, Germany, Spain, Denmark, the European Union and the Inter-American Development Bank. ECLAC has also developed a well recognized and widely used Handbook for Estimating the Socio-Economic and Environmental Effects of Disasters. This handbook describes the methods required to assess the social, economic and environmental effects of disasters, breaking them down into direct damages and indirect losses and into overall and macroeconomic effects. This knowledge will be transformed into a risk management and adaptation tool.

<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/disasters/disenvi/eclac-handbook.html>

ECLAC has also initiated work to assess the economic co-benefits of low carbon investment options, such as employment per dollar of investment, vis-à-vis mainstreaming options at a regional scale, in order to support better informed public policy investment decisions for development and, in partnership with ESCAP, is currently exploring the opportunities in Asian and Latin American cities to provide incentives for the development of eco-efficient infrastructure in the framework of urban development.

<http://www.unescap.org/esd/environment/infra/daproject.asp>

### b. Financing Climate Change for Africa:

The Secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMECEN) commissioned a technical policy brief on financing climate change in Africa for negotiators and policy makers that was produced by ECA in collaboration with the OECD-African Partnership Forum. The technical paper served as a background document for the high-level experts meeting at the third special session of the AMECEN, and also fed into the deliberations of the Third Financing for Development (F4D) Conference, held in Kigali, Rwanda from 21 to 22 May 2009, under the theme "climate change". The outcomes of the AMECEN Special Session and the Financing for Development Conference were endorsed by the Thirteenth Ordinary Summit of the African Union in July 2009.



### 3. Supporting mitigation efforts:

#### a. Promoting energy-efficiency and green-growth initiatives:

The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) is pursuing a sustainable energy programme called Energy Efficiency 21. Within this programme, it manages the Financing Energy Efficiency Investments for Climate Change Mitigation project, with a budget of approximately US\$7.5 million, financed by the United Nations Foundation, UN Environment Programme/ Global Environment Facility (UNEP/ GEF), Fonds Française pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) and the European Business Congress E.V.. The project aims to assist Eastern European countries to enhance their energy efficiency and access to renewable sources of energy. It supports the creation of a dedicated investment fund and will provide a pipeline of new and existing projects to dedicated public private investment funds that can provide up to US\$250 million of mezzanine and/or equity financing to project sponsors. The fund, which will benefit from both public and private sources, will target energy efficiency and renewable investment projects in 12 countries in Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Outreach activities to other regional commissions in the context of energy efficiency for climate change mitigation are being organized by the ECE under the Global Energy Efficiency Project 21 project. This project, launched in December 2008 in Poznan, Poland is developing a systematic exchange of information and expertise between the regions on capacity-building, policy reform and investment project financing to promote cost-effective energy efficiency improvements that will diminish fuel poverty and reduce air pollution, including GHGs. A joint publication by the five UN Regional Commissions and UN Energy entitled "Financing Global Climate Change Mitigation" has been prepared for presentation during the UNFCCC COP-15 which provides a summary of the energy efficiency for climate change mitigation activities supported by each of the UN Regional Commissions and describes sources of financing for energy efficiency investments in each region.

[http://www.unece.org/press/pr2008/08sed\\_p07e.htm](http://www.unece.org/press/pr2008/08sed_p07e.htm)

In response to the necessity of combining economic growth with environmental sustainability, the countries of Asia and the Pacific adopted the Green Growth approach during the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development (MCED) that was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in March 2005. The Green Growth approach aims to lower energy, resource and carbon intensities in both production and consumption as an integral way to improve ecological efficiency and directly supports countries to align their development with action on climate change and, in turn, contribute to mitigating GHG emissions without undermining their development needs. The measures and tools are based on sound normative, analytical, and research work in following five paths as the most important policy measures to enhance green growth: sustainable consumption and production (demand-side management); greening business and markets; sustainable infrastructure; green tax and budget reform; eco-efficiency indicators.

<http://www.greengrowth.org/index.asp>

As a result of the 2005 MCED, ESCAP has been focusing on advocacy and capacity building for the application of important policy tools that can be applied to enhance the environmental suitability of economic growth and to adapt to climate change. Cambodia, Viet Nam and Bhutan were among the first countries to benefit from ESCAP's policy advice and capacity building activities in support of green growth. ESCAP also worked on designing a training of the trainers capacity development programme in support of green growth, funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

<http://www.greengrowth.org/mandate.asp>

[http://www.greengrowth.org/capacity\\_building/kanchanaburi.asp](http://www.greengrowth.org/capacity_building/kanchanaburi.asp)

In the Western Asia region, ESCWA has completed several assessment on energy efficiency potentials and option in the energy consuming sectors including, the industry, tourism, electricity and housing sectors; lately ESCWA also undertook an assessment study on energy efficiency and energy conservation opportunities in the field of oil and natural gas production. Current trends and technologies from exploration to transport, with specific case studies from selected countries in the region were also investigated.

In April 2008, ESCWA has completed a project based on an agreement signed in February 2006 with the Qatari General Electricity and Water Corporation (KAHRAMAA) to guide it in establishing necessary measures to upgrade the efficiency of its electric energy consumption in different sectors in particular the industrial and building sectors, as well as reducing the electricity peakload. According to the project results, a reduction of 22% of the Qatari peakload in summer can be achieved associated with 19% of the total fuel consumption and an annual emission reduction of 1.3 Million ton of CO<sub>2</sub>. The Qatari authorities confirmed that the recommendations and outcomes of the study will be taken into consideration for future implementation.

<http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/newsdetails.asp?id=162&division=SDPD>

ESCWA is currently preparing a report on promoting large scale Renewable Energy applications in the Arab region as an approach for climate change mitigation. The report focuses on the potential of establishment of wind farms and solar thermal power plants in the Arab countries.

ESCWA is also implementing a project for "Promoting Renewable Energy Applications in Rural Areas", with the objective of increasing access to clean energy, supporting small and medium enterprises and empowering women. The project includes the implementation of a Solar Village electrification project in Ka'awa village in Yemen. This project targeted the design, procurement, installation, testing and evaluation of a pilot photovoltaic rural electrification project for a typical Yemeni rural village with potential replications in other villages. This project's operation start is expected in mid-November 2009 and it will reduce the dependence on fuel and its associated greenhouse emissions as well as providing job opportunities for poverty alleviation.

<http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/otherdetails.asp?id=84>

<http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/otherdetails.asp?id=141>

In May 2008, the ECE climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in the transport sector focused on different means of CO<sub>2</sub> abatement. Including: a) innovative engine technologies to increase fuel efficiency; b) the use of sustainable biofuels; c) improved transport infrastructure; d) the dissemination of consumer information on eco-driving; e) the implementation of legal instruments. The Transport Health and Environment Pan-European Programme, a joint project of ECE and WHO, was initiated to help achieve more sustainable transport patterns and better reflection of environmental health concerns in transport policy.

<http://www.thepep.org/en/publications/THEPEP.assessment.en.pdf>

In order to promote policies and actions towards reducing GHG, from the Transport Sector, ESCWA, prepared a report on Transport for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region: Measures, Progress Achieved, Challenges and Policy Framework". The report covered the characteristics of the Arab transport sector, transport advanced technologies, fuel specifications and cleaner fuels, legislative and legal frameworks, as well as policies and priority actions required for reducing emissions.



b. Transport and Climate Change:

Regional organizations including the Asian Development Bank, the Clean Air Initiative and ESCAP are currently working on an initiative on "Transport and Climate Change" to exchange information and coordinate activities among key players in the region. The initiative aims to develop a coordinated action plan for strengthening the integration of transport sector policies on climate change.

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## 4. Supporting Adaptation efforts:

### a. Disaster risk reduction and preparedness:

The regions most affected by natural hazards and disasters related to weather events are the Asia and Pacific regions and Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result, there has been extensive work by UN Regional Commissions to increase the resilience of countries in the respective regions to the impacts of natural hazards. The use of space-based information and services to help reduce the risk of disasters in the Asia-Pacific region is promoted through the collaboration agreement between the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and ESCAP. Representatives of the two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding for managing climate variability and change, and the effort will bring about a “unified climate-risk management effort” within governments, UN agencies and the donor community.

[http://www.unescap.org/pmd/documents/mou/MoU\\_JAXA\\_12Dec08.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/pmd/documents/mou/MoU_JAXA_12Dec08.pdf)

<http://www.unescap.org/publications/detail.asp?id=1241>

The ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness was established in 2005 to strengthen capacities of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian countries in establishing early warning systems. Fund-supported initiatives have supported the development of monitoring and early warning services that provide effective support to lower-capacity countries, the establishment of Standard Operation Procedures and distribution of education and awareness materials that are used in regular national programmes. A Strategic Plan for the Fund was launched in 2009 along with a report on “Regional Unmet Needs.”

[http://www.unescap.org/pmd/tsunami\\_index.asp](http://www.unescap.org/pmd/tsunami_index.asp)

### b. Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources:

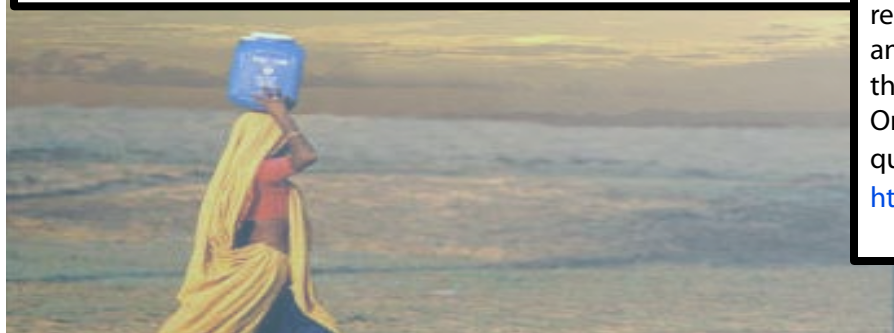
Under the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) led by ESCWA, an inter-agency Thematic Working Group on Climate Change was established headed by UNEP/ROWA that coordinates work on climate change among regional UN organizations and the League of Arab States (LAS). Among its activities, the Thematic Working Group is preparing a Methodology for Assessing the Vulnerability of Water Resources to Climate Change in the Arab Region. Regional collaboration on this activity was subsequently reinforced during the Ninth Sectoral Meeting between the LAS and the UN and their Specialized Organizations in June 2009, which focused on climate change and was chaired by ESCWA on behalf of the Secretary-General. The meeting concluded with agreement that UN and LAS specialized organizations would collaborate on the preparation of a vulnerability assessment on the impact of climate change on water and land resources. ESCWA is organizing and hosting the launching of this collaborative work with Member States during an expert group meeting in October 2009 in Beirut, which involves representatives from the LAS, WMO, World Bank, UNEP/ROWA, FAO, UNDP, ACSAD, ISESCO among other regional organizations.

<http://www.awarenet.org/Content.aspx?Page=9&ContentID=174>

<http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/teams.asp?teams=Water%20Resources&division=SDPD>

The Climate Change Working Group referenced above, adopted a work plan focused on the impacts of climate change on water resources and includes a review of the literature and identification of information gaps on the vulnerability of water resources to climate change in the Arab region; a roster of Arab experts on climate change and water resources; an analysis of the outcomes of COP-15, and a preliminary analysis of the effects of climate change on water resources in the Arab region. On this topic, also refer to the ECLAC studies on the economic consequences of climate change, including on water resources.

<http://www.eclac.cl/DRNI/proyectos/samtac/progasoc.asp>



c. The impact of Climate Change on land, agricultural productivity and food security:

An ESCAP study entitled "Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security in Asia and the Pacific" examines the environmental, economic and social challenges that are the roots of the region's food insecurity and suggests a regional framework of action to be taken by governments and the international community in order to create greater food security. Over the long term, adapting and mitigating impacts from climate change will have to be a top priority for all countries in the region and the study contains practical recommendations to address this priority in terms of food security.

[http://www.unescap.org/65/theme\\_study2009.asp](http://www.unescap.org/65/theme_study2009.asp)

In Latin America and the Caribbean regions, a collaboration agreement between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Joint Global Mechanism (JGM) and ECLAC was signed to study the economic consequences of land degradation in synergy with the rest of the assessments and of the impacts of climate change. The first undertaking – launched in July 2008, together with ECLAC and in association with the GEO Center of Mexico, is oriented to national assessment exercises on the actual and potential economic impacts of land degradation; and to consider national and subregional economic assessments of climate change impacts based on the Stern Review in order to establish links between these initiatives.

<http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cric5/pdf/3add2eng.pdf>







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